

ENHANCING SPEAKING SKILLS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Annotation: this article includes much information about how to develop the speaking skills in English lessons with support of innovative methods.

Key words: speaking, methods, process, communicating, English environment, ability, language, teaching and learning

English teaching and learning have the goal of focusing students so that they are able to use English for communication and as a tool for furthering their studies. In the process of teaching and learning, the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are simultaneously performed. Normally, learners in an EFL context do not use the language in authentic situations. They possess inability in communicating appropriately and correctly. This leads to learners' lack of self-confidence and avoidance when communicating with native English speakers. In foreign language teaching and learning, ability to speak is the most essential skill since it is the basic for communication and it is the most difficult skill. In particular, EFL learners often stammer when speaking English. This results from learners' lack of exposure to authentic English language environments that allow them to use English for communication and expression. Furthermore, learners are not exposed to the cultures of the native English speakers. Speaking is the most important and essential stated that mastery of this skill illustrates that the speaker possesses precise knowledge of language. According to many teaching theorists, speaking skill can be developed through communicative activities which include an information gap, a jigsaw puzzle, games, problem-solving, and Role-playing. In addition, supported this idea that the activities that can assist better speaking skills are free discussion and role-playing. Also, stated that the language activities are important factors in teaching language for communication. Activities help create interaction in the language classroom. Additionally, communicative activities can motivate the learners and establish good relationships between the teacher and the students as well as among the students thereby encouraging a supportive environment for language learning. The state and conditions of language learning and teaching at Satri Rachinuthit School, Udon Thani, were unsatisfactory. According to the report of it was found that their foreign language learning strand was 50.83%, which was at the average level and at

the lowest among the other strands of the school. From the study of teaching theories in developing speaking skills using communicative activities and many related research studies, it was hypothesized that three communicative activities, discussion, problem-solving and role-playing, might help solve the problem. On the basis of this literature, as the researcher would study the impacts of these three communicative activities, discussion, problem-solving and role-playing up students’ development of speaking skills and students’ attitude towards teaching English speaking using the three communicative activities.

Methodology

Scope of the Study

1) *The samples* The sample were 49 Grade 11 students of Satri Rachinuthit School, Udon Thani, Thailand, and the target group were 12 students, divided into 3 English proficiency levels (high, medium and low), using purposive selection. 2) *Variables* Dependent Variable was teaching English speaking skills using three communicative activities. Independent Variables were students’ English speaking abilities and attitude towards teaching English speaking using three communicative activities

B. Instruments The instruments employed in this study were: y Lesson plans y A test of English speaking ability was used as pretest and posttest y An attitude questionnaire y Students’ Learning Log y A semi-structured interview y Teacher Journal

C. Data Collectio Data was collected and the study done in the authentic classroom. A test of English-speaking ability test was employed as a pretest. Eight lesson plans with the three different communicative activities were used in a language classroom with 49 students. In the meantime, the students are asked to write their Learning Log, and the researcher wrote the Teacher Journal. After completion of the teaching, the students were interviewed using a semi-structured form. Finally, the attitude questionnaire was employed.

D. Data Analysis Quantitative and qualitative analyses were done. The quantitative analyses were from a test of English-speaking ability and an attitude questionnaire. The qualitative analyses were drawn from student Learning Log, a semi structured interviews, and the Teacher Journal using a triangulation method. This study produced several important results. These are discussed below. The posttest mean score of the students’ English-speaking abilities was significantly higher than the pretest one after the employing the three communicative activities, discussion, problem-solving, and role-playing. Characteristics of the activities may have encouraged interaction among the students in the language classroom. This could afford opportunity for language practice. The teacher arranged for language functions such as asking for directions, ordering food and beverages, talking on the telephone, and making an appointment with doctors. These types of activities can afford students experience using the language for real communication. This idea was consistent with where they proposed that the learner

should know the purpose of speaking, what to speak, with whom, and where to speak, and how to use appropriate language. In this study, the contents of the language through the three activities were carefully selected to suit the syllabus, the learners' age and language level, and to create challenges for the learners to gain experience. Teaching English speaking skills using the three communicative activities is a learning method focusing on the learner-centeredness. Students work in small groups divided by their language proficiency, i.e., high, medium, and low levels. Using this technique, students can have an opportunity to work together providing help to others while performing the activity. The atmosphere in working in groups can lessen their fear in making mistakes when speaking English. Students in the group can support others in the team needing help. They can express themselves successfully while working in groups. This can lead to self-monitoring, more confidence in speaking, and enjoyment can encourage them to participate more in learning. The results of this study supported the effectiveness of these three communicative activities in developing English speaking skills. Reference conducted a study of development of English-speaking skills using two communicative activities, Information-gap and Roleplaying. The samples were 38 second-year Business English students of Udon Thani Rajabhat Institute in Thailand. The results of the study revealed that the students' English-speaking skills were significantly higher after using these two communicative activities. Students' intensive interaction was effective in developing speaking English proficiency. Moreover, it can be seen from the current study that division into small groups (groups of four) promoted that students' confidence in producing the language as a result of their language proficiency. Students have been trained in using the language functions appropriately. Therefore, they could successfully develop themselves using these three activities. In conducting a communicative activity, the context should be focused on meaning not the form. While the students are involved in an activity, there should be no teacher intervention. Students can practice using the language among their group members. Group of four are the most effective. The students' attitude towards teaching English speaking skills using the three communicative activities was rated as good. This may result from having been provided adequate language functions in situations that occur in real communication leading to their confidence in speaking the language. They felt satisfied with their speaking English when using these three communicative activities. The process of teaching and learning helped creating enjoyment in speaking English in small groups. The feelings of success in learning to speak English through the three activities establish their motivation to learn the language. In conclusion, teacher should construct a variation of English-speaking activities which motivate the students to learn. Communicative activities such as discussion, problem solving, and role-playing can be affected used in the language classroom in Uzbek context. Other important factors in using these activities are the order or sequence of

these activities should be recognized. In breaking the students into small groups, optimal group size is four individuals. This leads to better success and achievement in learning foreign languages. Teacher roles should be changed as a provider, an assistant, a consultant to increase effectiveness in the learning environment. Interaction in the language classroom can decrease students’ anxiety in learning English speaking skills. Students should change the role from passive to active learners.

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